

The Flood

Audrey Rose's words reached him as whispers in his dreams. What they meant he didn't know. He wasted no time in leaving. He left new clothes as repentance, as compensation for the things he didn't know how to give. The clothes, soft clothes, felt warm and safe against her body. He would be back. Maybe. She would be there when he returned. Maybe.

His life wriggled and found a home inside of Audrey Rose. Roots dug into her womb, a tree sprouted, leaves moving like rain pouring. She giggled and danced and rubbed her belly. She lay on the ground and pressed her ear to the earth trying to hear the heartbeat of the Mother.

A fox ran stealthily past her, black feathers hanging from her mouth. Through the trees a crow cawed, following, announcing the loss of a friend, a lover, a child to the world.

The life in her held on. The tree flowered. Other worlds had lived and warred and escaped her body. Her mind filled with the curiosity of possibilities but slowly the truth crept around the edges, burning away her possibilities, eating at the edges until there was nothing left. What was beginning needed to end. Only Audrey Rose could be responsible.

She stabbed herself with her thoughts, speared the place where the imagination danced, with a thousand tiny daggers. She rubbed her stomach proudly until the cramps

descended. Audrey Rose was filled with the fear and awe of misunderstanding. In that moment, she knew what He stood for and why He existed.

She fell to her knees. As she sliced her insecurities, something inside broke. The horizon turned dark, the sky wept blood. Somewhere, someone was satisfied.

A drop ran down her leg, then another. A stream trickled, turning into a river. A flood rose in her, broke before the drought. Audrey Rose wanted to sing but no words came out. She wanted to write, but her hands stayed still. She wanted to dance, but her legs trembled under her.

At first her blood nourished the earth, grasses grew high. Flowers blanketed the hills in yellows, purples, reds, no white, but the blood kept flowing, running high over the plains, filling the trees, creeping up on the mountains. The tides washed away the mice, the chipmunks, the soldiers. Birds landed in her blood and were pulled under. Butterflies lost their colors. Her blood flowed and carved the earth, a path leading to dark places.

The sky turned orange. Fires burned in her blood, mixing colors. The earth was charred, cleansed.

When the flow stopped Audrey Rose's body was empty. No one called out her loss. The blood dried up and cracked. Peeled and chipped away, carried off by the winds. Some

people survived. Some people never noticed the flood. Smiles returned to their faces.

Miracles passed by without them ever seeing.

Sometimes alone Audrey Rose remembered.

She dug up her stories and buried her heart. She gathered pine needles to her. She craved shelter so she cut down trees, uprooted bushes and built a place she called home.

The words went away.

-Do not attempt to recreate the events of Audrey Rose's life. They will result in internal and/or external death or at the very least a yeast infection.